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ABSTRACT

This literature review examined five terms used to describe the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education schools and classrooms. The objective was to determine if these terms have consistent definitions and descriptions. Major journals and texts in education, and position statements and newsletters from special education organizations, were searched to obtain definitions and descriptors for the following terms: mainstreaming, integration, inclusion, regular education initiative, and supported education. The search was primarily limited to the years 1989 to 1994. Using a combination of qualitative methods, definitions and descriptions were compared to identify major similarities, differences, and major themes. The results indicate that educators, especially special educators, do not have clear and agreed-upon definitions and descriptions. This lack of a universally understood language has implications for education reform, student service provision, and communication and cooperation among special educators, as well as with general educators. (Contains 82 references.) (SW)

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SPECIAL EDUCATORS' LANGUAGE: DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to review literature describing the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings. Major journals and texts in education, as well as position statements and newsletters from special education organizations were searched to obtain definitions and descriptors for the terms mainstreaming, integration, inclusion, regular education initiative (REI), and supported education. The search was primarily limited to the years 1989 to 1994 for the sake of currency. Computer and hand searches were used to obtain references to be reviewed. Readings were given a primary code according to which term they most specifically described or defined. Secondary codes were also assigned when other terms were used within the article. Using a combination of qualitative methods, definitions and descriptions were compared to identify major similarities, differences, and major themes. The results indicate that educators, especially special educators, do not have clear and agreed upon definitions and descriptions. This lack of a universally understood language has implications for education reform, student service provision, and communication and cooperation between special educators, as well as with general educators.

SPECIAL EDUCATORS' LANGUAGE:

DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?

In the almost twenty years since the passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), educators have been attempting to define the extent to which students with disabilities are to be included in general education settings and classes. Mainstreaming, integration, regular education initiative (REI), inclusion and supported education are all terms that have been introduced and used in these attempts. Each of these terms carries connotations and denotations to educators; unfortunately, not all educators, not even special educators, understand or interpret these terms in the same way.

The purpose of this study was to examine five terms that have been used in education literature to describe including students with disabilities in general education schools and classrooms. Simply stated, the problem was to determine if educators are using the terms mainstreaming, integration, regular education initiative, inclusion, and supported education in a consistent manner, with consensus of definition and/or description. In this way, the question of whether special educators understand each other could be answered.

Background

EHA/IDEA[1]

The basis for examining the language used in discussing including students with disabilities in general[2] education classes lies in the least restrictive environment (LRE) provision of EHA/IDEA. The federal regulations require:

> 1. that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled; and
> 2. that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (34 C.F.R. §300.550).

While EHA/IDEA does not use any of the terms included in this literature review, there is the presumption that the general education school site and classroom are the starting point for meeting the least restrictive environment provision.

Federal regulations also require that "[e]ach public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services" (34 C.F.R. §300.551). The final placement decision or service option decision is the responsibility of each student's Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.) committee. Thus,

these legal requirements establish a need for using language that communicates clearly the service delivery options to be considered and implemented in educating students with disabilities.

Separate Systems

The formal institutionalization of special education has evolved from the federal law. This institutionalization or organizational view results from examining how special education has become a parallel or separate system within the total system of education, thus, resulting in a general education system and a special education system.

One of the major difficulties of this duality is that of responsibility. Instead of considering students with disabilities as the responsibility of the total education system, they become solely the responsibility of the special education system. As Judith Heumann, Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) states, "Historically, we have had two educational systems, one for students with disabilities and one for everyone else" (NCERI, p. 6).

The dual education system has been attacked based on "(1) the unnecessary segregation and labeling of children for special services, and (2) the ineffective practice of mainstreaming which has splintered the school life of many

students - both academically and socially" (Winners All, p. 8). Many special educators have advocated a merged system or at least a closer alignment of general and special education (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Halvorsen & Sailor, 1990; Pearman, Barnhart, Huang, & Mellblom, 1992; Thomas, 1994; Wang, Reynolds, Walberg, 1989; Wang, Walberg, & Reynolds, 1992; Will, 1984, 1986)). In advocating for coordination among educators, there arises a need for communication that is consistently understood and interpreted by all.

Method

Books, refereed journals, professional association publications, and newsletters were reviewed using a combination of computer and hand searches to identify source materials.[3] A total of 81 references are listed, more than 75% of which include either a definition or description of mainstreaming, integration, the regular education initiative, inclusion, supported education or a combination of the terms.

The original design of the study proposed restricting all literature to be reviewed to the period 1989 to 1994 in order to provide a current but comprehensive study of the terms. This time restriction was relaxed,[4] however, to the extent necessary to provide a context for the terminology used.

Definitions and descriptions of terms are often influenced by context and/or the period of time in which they

are introduced into usage. Placing events in context frequently assists in identifying the meaning of language. Consequently, efforts were made to introduce terms in context and time.

The purpose of this review of literature was to determine if terms used to describe the inclusion of students with disabilities have consistent definitions and descriptions. The constant comparative method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used in combination with methods of classifying and sorting qualitative data described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). For each reference reviewed definitions and/or descriptions were listed or quoted. Based on the words used in these definitions and description, not the title of the reference, reviews were catalogued according to the five terms. Some references were catalogued under more than one term, although a hierarchial ranking by perspective was imposed. Finally, reviews were sorted and categorized based on similarities among the definitions and descriptions.

Interpretation of terms was accomplished using the "replication" logic of case studies (Yin, 1989). In this study, each term was treated as a *case*; thus, the cases were used to expand and generalize rather than provide statistical summaries.

Discussion

Mainstreaming

The term mainstreaming seems to have enjoyed being in vogue more during the late 1970s and early 1980s than during the last six years. It has frequently been associated with "traditional" special education service delivery models. In other words, students with disabilities are assigned to special education classes for either part of a school day as in a resource class or the majority of the day as in a self-contained class and mainstreamed into general education classes. With this model, students with disabilities are "pulled out" of general education to attend special education classes, then mainstreamed into general education classes.

The National Association of School Boards described mainstreaming in terms of separating students from their home schools as well as from the general education classes. In Winners All, they wrote, "Mainstreamed students pass in and out of general education classrooms throughout the day. . . . mainstreamed students often attend schools that are far away from their home school" (1992, p. 12).

In a United States General Accounting Office (1994) report mainstreaming is defined as classroom separation:

> [Mainstreaming] usually means that a student receives instruction in a separate classroom for the disabled, but participates in some activities

> within the general education classroom. Such a student is considered primarily a member of the traditional special education classroom and the responsibility of the special education teacher (p. 2).

Rogers (1993) elaborates on this separation theme when he defines mainstreaming as "the selective placement of special education students in one or more 'regular' education classes" (p. 1). He describes mainstreaming as an "earned opportunity" for a student who is able to "keep up." With this interprétation of mainstreaming there is an implicit requirement that a student may be mainstreamed only if s/he has demonstrated the ability to perform at grade level.

Bains, Bains, and Masterson (1994), on the other hand, depict mainstreaming as 'dumping' of special education students into general education classes. In this case study of one school's experience, the authors state that the school is "mainstreaming almost all special education students into its classes" (p. 40). The use of description by Ohanian (1990) also reveals a belief that mainstreaming is 'dumping' of students with disabilities into general education classes:

> I read in texts advocating mainstreaming that disabled students need 'a chance to shine,' that they 'will learn from nondisabled students,' that students with disabilities must be 'seen as peers of nondisabled students.' But nobody can make a disabled student equal, and nobody can promise a disabled student a phone call from a friend (p. 219).

This somewhat bitter description highlights her experience of mainstreaming, that of placing students with disabilities haphazardly into general education classes with little or no attention given to whether the student can "keep up" or is an actual member of the class or to the need to provide assistance to the classroom teacher.

The view of mainstreaming as 'dumping' is possibly described most vividly by David Hornbeck, former superintendent of education for the state of Maryland. He stated, "too often *classic* mainstreaming means simply flinging the disabled kid into the regular class and saying to the poor beleaguered teacher, 'Good luck,'" (emphasis added, Kober, 1992, p. 16).

As a method of special education service delivery, mainstreaming appears to be viewed unfavorably at the current time. Additional indicators of this unfavorable status can be detected through descriptions which include negative words. For example, in Winners All, mainstreaming is referred to as an "ineffective practice" (1992, p. 8). This report goes on to state that "studies have shown that mainstreamed special education students who are 'pulled out' for special instruction may actually receive less direct instruction in such areas as reading than their non-labelled peers" (p. 10).

On the other hand, a redefinition of mainstreaming may be

occurring. Huefner (1994) describes mainstreaming according to types - physical, social, and instructional - dependent upon the reason mainstreaming is deemed important to the student. She states that there is a need to determine how much and to what purpose mainstreaming should be used to "integrate students with severe disabilities as regular members of mainstream classes and schools" (p. 28). Through the differentiation of types of mainstreaming and the necessity of examining the desired outcome, students are not required to earn the opportunity to be in the general education class, nor is there the pressure for them to "keep up" and the possibility of "dumping" is reduced.

Integration

The term integration, at least in part, originated from the deinstitutionalization movement during the mid-1960s to late 1970s (Larson & Lakin, 1989; Silver, 1994). Integration frequently refers to placing students with disabilities into 'regular' schools rather than providing special education services in institutional or separate special school settings.

Halvorsen and Sailor (1990) refer to the "educational integration of severely disabled students with their nondisabled age peers...[as] far more than the mere placement of students in regular education settings" (p. 112). Although they imply that integration is more than mere placement on a

regular school campus, their "critical integration markers" refer to physical setting. These markers are age appropriate school, single site administrator, natural proportions of disabled students, and the provision of related services. Haring, Farron-Davis, Karasoff, Zeph, Goetz, and Sailor (1990) in a study of placements of students with severe disabilities similarly define integration as "age appropriate placement in a regular public school" (p.19).

McDonnell and Hardman (1989) state, "'Integration' has a variety of meanings and its use is frequently ambiguous" (p. 68). First integration is defined as providing special education services within a 'regular' school building; but, they clarify:

> Integration implies more than physical presence within regular schools and includes (a) active participation within chronologically age-appropriate regular education classes and (b) the systematic use of any adaptive or support strategies needed to achieve mutually satisfying and ongoing relationships with nondisabled classmates (p. 68).

In their interpretation, they do not describe whether integration means students with disabilities are assigned to general education or special education class rolls or whether students are to be integrated part or all of the school day into general education classes.

The federal Office of Special Education and

Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) in a news update stated its mission is "to promote full integration and participation in society by individuals with disabilities through equal access to, and excellence in, education, rehabilitation, and disability research" (1994, cover). Although not explicit, the implicit message in the use of '*full* integration' is that students with disabilities are to be included both on regular school campuses and in the classrooms. This interpretation is consistent with that of Hunt and Farron-Davis (1992), Gallagher (1994), Sailor (1991), and Williams, Villa, Thousand, and Fox (1989).

Thus, while integration definitely refers to including students with disabilities on the same school campuses as nondisabled students, whether or not these students are to be included in the general education classes is less clear. Even when it is clear that students with disabilities are to be included both on the campus and in the general education classes, the amount time to be spent is ambiguous and the purpose of integration is unclear.

Regular Education Initiative

Whereas the terms mainstreaming and integration generally refer to the delivery of special education services to students, the term regular education initiative or REI refers to a conception of how general education and special education

should work together to provide educational services to students with disabilities. In the majority of instances, the REI has been associated with the provision of educational services to students with mild disabilities. The introduction of the REI is usually attributed to Madeleine Will, former Assistant Secretary for Education, U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.

In Will's addresses to the Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention (1984) and to the Wingspread Conference (1986) she emphasized that general and special education must examine their methods of educating children from a perspective that focuses on collaboration and cooperation. She said that special education programs that use 'pull out' strategies presuppose "that students with learning problems cannot be effectively taught in regular education programs even with a variety of support" (p. 412). Furthermore, the organizational characteristics that differentiate general and special education do not support a "cooperative, supportive partnership between school officials, teachers, and parents in the education of the child" (p. 413). Instead she called for the development of experimental programs and partnerships to create "a more powerful, more responsive education system,...[which] will not mean that the

role of special education teachers and other special assistance providers will be eliminated or diminished" (p. 415), but effective teaching practices will be used to educate all students.

Other educators credited with contributing to conceptualizing education of students with disabilities and, in fact all students, as a cooperative effort include Lipsky and Gartner and Wang, Walberg, and Reynolds. Lipsky and Gartner (1987) focused on two flaws in separating education into general education and special education. These flaws result from "at least two sets of factors: (1) those concerning schools and pedagogy and (b) those concerning attitudes towards persons with disabilities" (p. 69). While acknowledging that special education was "successful in bringing unserved students into public education and [establishing] their right to education", they state, "The assumptions underlying separate programs have produced a system that is both segregated and second class" (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987, p. 368).

Wang et al. (1988) identified special education as a part of a "second system" that also includes Chapter/Title 1, migrant programs, etc. Their proposal has been to integrate "second-system programs into regular education to form a comprehensive educational system that encompasses a wide range

of coordinated programs and alternative opportunities" (p. 248).

These calls for cooperation and coordination among educators in order to provide program alternatives for all students is the context for the introduction of the term regular education initiative (Algozzine, Maheady, Sacca, O'Shea, & O'Shea, 1990; Maheady & Algozzine, 1991; Muir & Hutton, 1989; Thousand & Villa, 1991; Wang, Reynolds, Walberg, 1989). Sailor (1991) summarized the context by stating,

> [REI] gained support from several prominent educational researchers whose data collectively suggested that under certain service delivery models children with learning disabilities, for example, would do better in mainstreamed educational programs than in pull-out, resource room, separate classroom-oriented programs (p. 10)

Yet how is educating students with disabilities conceptualized under the REI? Table 1 shows various definitions of REI.

The most common theme and proposition of the regular education initiative is including students with disabilities in the general education classes. Sage and Burrello (1994) state, "the prevailing theme of this initiative [REI] is a call to encourage greater social and academic integration of students with disabilities by placing them in general education classrooms" (p. 8). The key to accomplishing this is through

Table 1
Definitions of the Regular Education Initiative

The regular education initiative is/means

- "that interventions occurring within the regular classroom be implemented in place of pull-out programs" (Coates, 1989, p. 532)
- "the movement advocating that the general education system assume unequivocal, primary responsibility for all students in our public schools" (Davis, 1989, p. 440)
- "to increase the alternatives for providing services to children with learning problems in the regular classroom so they do not have to be referred to special education as the only option for service" (Dublinske, 1989, p. 47)
- a "call for special and general education to share the responsibility for educating students with learning and behavior problems" (Friend & Cook, 1990, p. 80)
- "efforts to serve students with moderate/severe disabilities in supported education...on enhancing integration" (Hamre-Nietupski, Sherwood, & Abels, 1991, p. 6)
- "a varied set of reform proposals sharing a common theme - special education pullout programs of all kinds have been discredited for most or all students with special needs, whereas evidence supports the effectiveness of fully integrated programs in general education for most or all students with disabilities" (Kauffman, Braaten, Nelson, Polsgrove & Braaten, 1990, p. 559).
- "to fully integrate or mainstream any and all children into regular classrooms regardless of condition, disability, fragility, vulnerability, or need" (Leiberman, 1990, p. 562)
- "the merger of the governance of special and 'regular' education or the merger of the funding streams of each" (Rogers, 1993, p. 2)

> advocacy, technology, and programmatic experiences of special educators to improve the educational opportunities for an even larger and more diversified population of children and youth than are presently being served by the current special education system (Davis, 1990, p. 350).

Jenkins, Pious, and Jewell (1990) indicate the "REI is largely without definition" (p. 480) and suggest a basic problem may be either the perception that special educators are relinquishing authority for educational services or attaching additional responsibilities to general educators without necessary assistance:

> According to the assumptions we have read into the REI, the essence of the initiative is the authority and responsibility given the classroom teacher for educating all students assigned to him or her. Even though the teacher calls on and coordinates support from specialists, he or she is in charge (p. 482)....The line needs to be drawn somewhere to protect teachers from unrealistic demands and to assure parents of normally achieving students that their child will prosper (p. 485).

Thus, they conclude, "We read the spirit of the REI as follows: *the classroom teacher and the specialist form a partnership in terms of instruction, but the classroom teacher is ultimately in charge*" (emphasis in original, p. 487).

Opponents to REI, such as Vergason and Anderegg (1989a, 1989b) and Vergason, Anderegg, Garrison and Smith (1991) cite the lack of adequate research, restriction of placement options for students with disabilities, failure of general educators to educate students, and usurpation of the authority

of the general educator as reasons for their opposition. Finally, the failure to include general educators in the initiation of the *regular education initiative* has been often cited as presumptuous and arrogant (Banks, 1992; Coates, 1989; Leiberman, 1990; Phillips, Allred, Brulle, & Shank, 1990; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991)

Examining the statements of proponents and opponents to REI, along with the definitions, gives an indication that Jenkins et al. (1990) are correct, there is no definition. REI provides a vision for educating all students in an atmosphere of cooperation, collaboration, and collegiality. Trent (1989) writes,

> Most [proponents of REI] do not advocate a total rejection of pull-out programs but see new approaches as extensions of the current special education service delivery model. Also, supporters of the REI contend that a move to strengthen the existing model will enhance educational programming for all learners (p. 23).

Yet, as a method of providing services to students with disabilities there is little direction. Silver writes,

> From the first time I learned of the Regular Education Initiative (REI), I felt uncomfortable. The ideas were good: Keep the children and adolescents in a regular classroom environment; address academic and special education needs in a way that least isolates them from their peers; make these students feel less different (1994, p. 29).

He acknowledges the worth of these ideals and practices, but worries that the movement of students with disabilities into

general education classes will be accomplished without the necessary supports, either for the students or the classroom teachers. Miller (1990) echoes this sentiment in pointing out that "unless a partnership develops" (p. 17), general educators will feel frustration with being required to do more work with less help. In this way he and others share the concern that special education will 'dump' students *back* into general education where they failed previously; thus, perpetuating a cycle of failure.

Inclusion

The literature on inclusion composes the bulk of this review. Although there are no distinct time periods for each of the terms thus far discussed, one of the most current terms is inclusion and/or full inclusion. However, the basis for inclusion has a much longer history beginning with the concepts of "zero rejection" (Lily, 1971) and normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972).

Inclusion has been more heatedly debated than either mainstreaming or integration, although possibly on par with the REI. Most of the literature on mainstreaming did not have a specific category of disability attached, although it seems students with mild disabilities were the targeted population (Snell & Eichner, 1989). Literature on integration addresses students with severe disabilities more frequently than

students with mild disabilities; while the REI has usually been associated with students with mild disabilities. Literature on inclusion has variously addressed students with severe and mild disabilities.

Inclusion and full inclusion have encompassed various definitions dependent upon the writer or group. Table 2 summarizes definitions of inclusion and Table 3 summarizes those for full inclusion.

With few exceptions, the definitions of inclusion and full inclusion incorporate both the elements of school site and classroom participation. The goal of inclusion as stated by Wisniewski and Alper (1994) is "not just physical proximity, but rather, active and mutual social interactions" (p. 8). Similarly, Stainback, Stainback, East, and Sapon-Shevin (1994) state, "the goal of inclusion is to create a community in which all children work and learn together and develop mutually supportive repertoires of peer support" (p. 486).

According to York (1993), "Inclusion is not a place. It cannot be defined in terms of minutes in a day, and what it means to specific individuals in schools will vary" (p. 3). However, as can be noted from the definitions in Tables 2 and 3, inclusion often begins in a *place* - usually the school site or the general education classroom or both.

Table 2
Definitions of Inclusion

Inclusion is/means

- "the provision of services to students with disabilities, including those with severe handicaps, in their neighborhood school, in age-appropriate general education classes, with the necessary support services and supplementary aids (for the child and teacher) both to assure the child's success - academic, behavioral, and social - and to prepare the child to participate as a full and contributing member of society" (NCERI, 1994, p.1-2)

- "used to refer to the commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend [if not disabled]" (Rogers, 1993, p. 1)

- "keeping special education students in regular education classrooms and bringing support services to the child, rather than bring the child to the support services" (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994, p. 35-36)

- "that students with disabilities belong in general education classrooms and that they receive the supports and services necessary to benefit from their education in the education setting" (TASH, 1993, p. 1).

- "that students attend their home school with their grade and age peers" (Winners All, 1992, p. 12)

A major argument for inclusion as presented by Haas (1993) is - why should students with disabilities be segregated in pull out special education classes when the "goal of special education is to help children with disabilities so that they can function in everyday society"

Table 3
Definitions of *Full* Inclusion

- The Board of Directors of Learning Disabilities Association defined "full inclusion, full integration, unified system, inclusive education as 'terms used to describe a popular policy/practice in which *all students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or the severity of the disability and need for related services, receive their total education within the regular education classroom in their home school*" (emphasis in original, Gallagher, 1994, p. 19)
- "Full inclusion is a term used to describe the placement of children with disabilities in a regular education classroom with children who do not have disabilities" (Haas, 1993, p. 34)
- Full inclusion "is primarily used to refer to the belief that instructional practices and technological supports are presently available to accommodate all students in the schools and classrooms they would otherwise attend if not disabled" (Rogers, 1993, p. 2)
- "In an inclusion program, sometimes called a 'full'-inclusion program, all students, no matter what disabilities they may have, are taught in a general education classroom" (USGAO, 1994, p. 1)

(p. 34). This argument is reinforced by the views of Pearman, et al. (1992) who state, "Current practices that separate students assume that students can be taken out of their naturally occurring environment, fixed, and returned" (p. 181).

Gilbert (1993) provides a list of what inclusion is and is not. For example, she writes,

> [Inclusion is] all children learning in the same school with the necessary services and supports so that they can be successful...and a new service delivery model for special education which emphasizes collaboration between special education and regular education (p. 1).

Conversely, she says,

> [Inclusion is not] dumping children with challenging needs into regular classes without proper supports and services they need to be successful...all children having to learn the same thing at the same time, in the same way...and doing away with special education services or cutting back on special education services (p. 1).

While the synopsis of this list directs attention to the student as an included/involved learner, it also focuses on the cooperative and collaborative responsibilities of teachers. Lipsky (1994) indicates that general and special educators benefit from inclusionary practices by sharing responsibility for students' performance and outcomes: "Reports from school districts indicate that the achievement of inclusive education presumes that no one teacher can - or ought - to be expected to have all the expertise required to meet the educational needs of all the students in the classroom" (p. 5).

The definitions and descriptions of inclusion or full inclusion focus attention on changing the method and the place in which students are provided special education services, as well as on the personnel - teachers - responsible for that

education. Moreover, Rogers presents the view that inclusion "is simply a way of reconceptualizing special education service delivery: the traditional model requires bringing the child to the special education services and the inclusion model requires bringing the special education services to the child" (1993, p.3). In this same vein, the NCERI reports, "Inclusion is not relabelled 'mainstreaming,' which posits two separate systems - general and special education -and has largely been limited to non-academic activities" (p. 2).

Wheelock (1992) identifies the problem more as one of trying to meet the competing "mandates for excellence and mandates for equity" (p. 6). In a similar manner, Heumann addresses this issue by writing,

> The United States Department of Education's mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation. Inclusion is consistent with this mission and is an essential component of current school reform initiatives (1994, p. 1).

To compare and contrast the four terms examined thus far, inclusion/full inclusion as a service delivery model differs from mainstreaming since it presumes the student with disabilities is a part of the general education classroom and special services go to the child. Inclusion/full inclusion and integration both require students with disabilities to receive educational services at age appropriate school sites;

however, the use of an inclusionary model extends the model to include the classroom and all parts of school life (Louisiana Clearinghouse on Inclusive Education, 1991; TASH, 1993; Yancy, 1994). Squires, Barousse, Olivier, and Arceneaux (1993) point out, "In the past, students who were 'mainstreamed' were placed in classes, primarily academic classes, for instructional purposes" (p. 150).

As was stated earlier, the REI is not actually a model of service delivery. As a vision of how special education should be, the REI and the goals of inclusion are similar - to include students with disabilities in the total school experience; definitions and descriptions of REI and inclusion also present a picture of general and special educators cooperating and collaborating in the education of all students. REI and inclusion differ, however, on who is responsible for student outcomes; that is, the REI, at least implicitly, gives primary responsibility for student performance and outcomes to the general educator, whereas, inclusion advocates joint responsibility. Another difference is that the inclusion model of service delivery starts with the premise that students with disabilities must be provided with the *necessary supports* in the general education classroom. In this way also, the student assumes membership in the general education classroom.

Supported Education

Only four primary references were found for the term supported education. Two of the references identify supported education from the perspective of providing and increasing social interactions for students with disabilities. Wacker describes supported education as providing

> students with a variety of meaningful experiences that are not typically available in alternative educational programs....as our students interact with peers, age appropriate social behavior is shaped and maintained by natural contingencies without our having to specifically program for their occurrence (1989, p. 254).

This social aspect of supported education is also found in Haring and Breen (1989): "The rationale for supported education is based largely on increasing social participation, acceptance, and friendships between students with severe disabilities and nondisabled students" (p. 255).

A slightly different perspective is presented by Stainback and Stainback (1989). They refer to supported education as the "education of students with disabilities in regular class" (p. 271). Along the same lines Inclusive Education Programs reports that, "Supported education is defined in the study as special education staff and related service staff supporting students with disabilities in more regular classroom environments" (1994, p. 8).

Two additional references were found to the term from an

article on the REI and from a policy report on inclusion. In the context of the article on the REI, the author writes,

> I was struck by how efforts to serve students with moderate/severe disabilities in *supported education* have evolved in one relatively small community in Iowa in which we worked. For over four years, parents, educators labeled 'special' and 'regular', the principal, and I have worked cooperatively on enhancing integration (emphasis added, Hamre-Nietupski, et al., 1991, p. 6).

In the second reference, Skrtic and Sailor write

> [B]ecause one of our recommendations is to implement inclusive education in conjunction with a broader set of interrelated reforms, we discuss inclusive education in terms of the notion of 'supported education,' a more comprehensive reform concept that includes inclusive education as one of its components (1993, p. 4).

Even with the few references found for supported education, it seems that this term is being used in a manner similar to inclusion, yet with the addition of an explicit emphasis on socialization. The comment of Skrtic and Sailor (1993) implies that supported education has a broader definition and description than inclusion, but they only hint at what these may be. The key, however, may be in the use of the word *reform*.

Conclusion

Do special educators understand each other? The answer seems to be a qualified <u>maybe</u>. Examining the views presented of each term, Table 4 summarizes major themes.

Table 4
Major Themes Related to Mainstreaming, Integration, REI, Inclusion, and Supported Education

Mainstreaming	Integration	REI	Inclusion	Sup. Education
•separate classes	•regular school campus	•concept or vision of special education, not service delivery model	•regular school and classroom	•special services in regular/ general education
•earned opportunity	•activities with age appropriate peers		•special services brought to the student	•regular school and classroom
•'dumping'		•primarily used in discussing students with mild disabilities		
•school site other than neighborhood school	•both regular school campus and classes		•support provided to general education teachers and/or to students	•more than inclusion
•mainstreaming based on desired outcome	•primarily used in discussing students with severe disabilities	•general educators responsible for programming and outcomes		•social preparation and/or participation
			•primarily severe disabilities, sometimes mild disabilities	

In addition to the primary issue of language and communication two additional issues must be addressed. First, there is the relationship between the terms mainstreaming, integration, the REI, inclusion, and supported education and the least restrictive environment (LRE) provision of EHA/IDEA, including the requirement that a continuum of services be provided. Second, there is the *education reform movement*.

LRE

The crux of the issue of language lies with the interpretation of the definitions and descriptions of each of the terms presented. Mainstreaming has been interpreted to mean an earned opportunity to participate in general education

classes, if the student is capable. Integration has been interpreted to mean that students with disabilities should receive their educational services on the same school campus as nondisabled students of a similar age. The regular education initiative has been interpreted to mean that special education as a separate system within the total educational system should not exist. Furthermore, it is interpreted that students with disabilities will be placed in general education classes with general educators as the personnel responsible for student performance and outcomes with a minimum of special services or none at all. Inclusion and, in particular, *full* inclusion have been interpreted to mean placing all students with disabilities in general education classes on age appropriate school campuses with special educators providing supportive services to the general educators, the students, or both. The interpretation of supported education remains unclear, but appears to have overtones of inclusion but with the explicit message that necessary services to *support* students with disabilities in general education classes and social situations will be provided.

The issue that arises from these interpretations is LRE and the continuum of services. In a study comparing states and school systems providing students with disabilities educational services on age appropriate regular school and

segregated campuses, Hasazi, Johnson, Leggett, & Schattman (1994) found a basic *philosophical* difference. When segregated placements were infrequently used, LRE was interpreted "to mean the delivery of appropriate special education services in neighborhood schools, so that students could attend schools with their peers without disabilities" (p. 495). In districts which frequently placed students with disabilities on segregated campuses, on the other hand, LRE was viewed as a policy "focused on practices that considered one child at a time" (p. 496). While the distinction may be somewhat hazy, the implication is that "low users" of segregated placements begin from the assumption all students are to be included in general education.

Haring et al. (1990) had similar comments: "The law [EHA/IDEA] presumes that a disabled child can be instructed in the regular education environment....A more restrictive placement can lawfully be made only if it can be shown that the child *could not benefit* from the regular educational environment" (emphasis added, p. 4). Martin (1994) in reviewing court cases related to student placement posed and answered the following question:

> How have courts interpreted the new term 'inclusion?' They have continued to follow the legal concept of least restrictive environment across a full continuum of service options. And most importantly, courts underscore the decision to

> be made is different for each individual child. Any concept that assumes all children will receive one type of service has no support in the law (p. 29).

Thus, the presumption is that LRE and the continuum of service or placement options begins with the general education classroom, but are individually determined decisions.

Opponents to the REI and inclusion have used the argument ~~agreement~~ that inclusion takes away a student's right to an individual decision. They interpret including students in general education classes as the only service option (Fuchs, 1994; Gallagher, 1994; Smelter et al., 1994; Vergason et al., 1991). Proponents of including students with disabilities in general education settings and classrooms, however, emphasize that the continuum remains intact, only the approach to making decisions changes (Banks, 1992; Forest & Pearpoint, 1991; Gilbert, 1993; Heumann, 1994; Kaufman, Kameenui, Birman, & Danielson, 1990). Therefore, a very real issue is clarifying that using terms such as inclusion or supported education or even full inclusion do[redacted] not and cannot revoke the student's right to an education in the least restrictive environment for him/her.

Education Reform

The regular education initiative as a reform movement emphasized the need for educational change. As Gartner and

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Lipsky (1987) stated "It is not special education but the total educational system that must change" (p. 382). In fact, they asserted that the time had come to change from the dual, parallel, or separate systems by:

> Turning from the effort to perfect a separate special education system, it is time to move on to the struggle of changing the educational system to *make it one and special for all students. In so doing, we will affirm the belief that all children are full-fledged human beings, capable of achievement and worthy of respect*" (p. 73).

Unfortunately these early reform efforts had little impact because of the failure to include all stakeholders, namely general educators. Yet, the REI did initiate or ignite a dialogue and debate among educators, as well as (re)introduce the child or student as the focus of education. Brynes perceives other lessons learned from the REI in this way: "[W]e should remember that, just as no two children are exactly the same, no one method will work equally well with everyone. The special education movement has taught us to respect diversity" (1990, p. 349).

Pearman et al. (1992) state, "The general education reform movement has provided an opportunity to restructure the education system to include all students, rather than separating regular education and entitlement programs" (p. 176). Via the general reform of education, many have seen a means of restructuring or reconceptualizing the education of

students with disabilities (Miller, 1990; Thousand & Villa, 1991, Sailor, 1991). McLeskey and Pacchiano (1994) reviewed 11 Annual Reports to Congress on the implementation of EHA/IDEA and concluded, "The only real hope for successfully including students with learning disabilities in typical classroom settings seems to be a restructuring of regular-class settings" (p. 516) However, Forest and Pearpoint (1991) dramatically make the point that:

> The key educational question for the year 2000 will *not* be 'What is inclusion, integration, or mainstreaming?' The key question will be *What kind of schools and communities do we want for ourselves and our families*? (p. 1)

Implications

To the question - Do we understand each other?, the answer must be - *on some things and at some times*. The issue of whether we are communicating clearly and understanding each other is vital. Madeleine Will said,

> I am one who firmly believes that the basic form and substance of our institutions and the language we employ to describe them are revealing and of rock-bed importance.
>
> My point is that [the] language and terminology we use in describing our education system is full of language of separation, of fragmentation, of removal. To the extent that our language reflects the reality of our system as many diverse parts never or rarely connected as a whole, it reflects a flawed vision of education for our children (1986, p. 412).

At the most fundamental level, the language used to discuss

student placement in general education settings and classrooms has been evolving in an effort to be more child centered, to be more aware that inclusion should be the first LRE option, not an earned opportunity or afterthought. Apropos to the issue of language, Snell and Eichner point out, "Various terms...are sometimes used interchangeably, and frequently with quite different meanings intended" (1989, p. 110). Unfortunately, as new terms are introduced the old or previous ones do not faded away.

Special education as a system is replete with terminology and acronyms which often, but not always, facilitate communication between special educators. These same words, phrases, and letters, often, however, impede communication across educational professions.

Debate and dialogue about educational practices is an essential component in the attempt to refine practice. It is worthwhile to examine educational methods and strategies from a variety of viewpoints. Yet, discussion and debate can only be profitable if those involved are using a common language or words with agreed upon definition. After completing this literature review a major implication for special educators must be to attempt to cleanse the professional language of antiquidated words or to redefine the language, in order that meaningful debate can be conducted.

Notes

1. The Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) of 1975 or P.L. 94-142 was amended in 1990 and is now referred to as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or P.L. 101-476.

2. The term 'general' education replaces 'regular' education in this paper.

3. Special thanks are extended to Nanette Olivier, Supervisor of Programs for Students with Severe Disabilities, Office of Special Educational Services, Louisiana Department of Education, and personnel associated with the Systems Change ~~grade~~ GRANT for access to their library of literature.

4. Eighty-five percent of the references are within the years 1989 to 1994.

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